

K-591

1774, c. 1806

Site of Old Hynson's Chapel (also Kent Meeting House, Kent Chapel)

Near Fairlee

Private

On a site now a woods southeast of Ricaud's Branch Road, several hundred feet from its western junction with Route 20, Kent County's first organized Methodist society in 1774 erected the first Methodist place of worship to be built on the Delmarva Peninsula. Meeting first at the home of (John?) Carvill Hynson, the society was organized and nurtured by Francis Asbury, Methodism's best-known itinerant, who became known as the "Father of American Methodism." By 1806 Asbury reported that a "new, neat chapel" had been built. Virtually nothing is known of either building, and there are no remains above ground. The first seems to have been frame; it was reported that opponents of the Methodists came at night to tear down the framework and that it had to be rebuilt. Early nineteenth-century camp meetings reportedly were held in Hynson's Woods near the chapel, and on the lower-lying land across the branch an "African Meeting House" was erected by 1860 on a small parcel deeded to the trustees of that independent or semi-independent group. This congregation probably was the first black Methodist congregation in the Rock Hall area. A cemetery is located to the rear of the possible building site of Old Hynson's and contains both marked and unmarked stones. Two early itinerant Methodist preachers are buried there. Apparently the victim of both the success and divisiveness of nineteenth-century Methodism, though the precise reasons are unknown, the remnant of the Old Hynson's congregation relocated in 1863, building a new Hynson's Chapel two miles to the east at Baker's Lane.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. K-591

Magi No. 1505915308

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Site of Old Hynson's Chapel, Kent Meeting House, Kent Chapel

and/or common

2. Location

Southeast side, Ricaud's Branch-Langford Road
street & number 500 ft. east of Route 20, 3 miles southwest of Fairlee, not for publicationcity, town Fairlee ☒ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Kent

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Cemetery

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Frank S. and Thelma K. Shriley

street & number Main Street telephone no.: 639-7277

city, town Rock Hall state and zip code Maryland 21661

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber EHP131

street & number Cross Street folio 248

city, town Chestertown, state Maryland 21620 (parcel 34.29 acres)

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys NONE

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. K-591

SITE ONLY

Condition

☐ excellent

☐ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☐ altered

Check one

☐ original site

☐ moved

date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Located near the western end of Ricaud's Branch Road, formerly part of the old main route from Rock Hall to Chestertown, the site of Old Hynson's Chapel (Methodist Episcopal) is within a small woodland recently partially cleared for commemorative purposes. There are no structural remains above ground, though a sunken area, possibly indicating a former foundation, can be seen. A burial ground, with both marked stones and fieldstones, lies to the rear of a possible chapel location. There was once also what was called an "African meeting house," also Methodist, near Hynson's Chapel in the same woods but on the lower-lying ground on the other side of the creek. A graveyard was not seen there but may be present.

Now privately owned, the site of Old Hynson's Chapel (Methodist Episcopal) and its surviving cemetery are on the southeast side of Ricaud's Branch-Langford Road several hundred feet east of the intersection with the modern Chestertown-Rock Hall road (State Route 20). Until the mid-twentieth century all traffic traveling north from Rock Hall toward Chestertown made a northeasterly turn at this point and continued eastward along Ricaud's Branch Road. Ricaud's Branch Road is now a narrow, winding, secondary road; and a new, straight stretch of Route 20 a little over a mile long runs to McLean's Corner to the north, connecting with the old McLean's Corner-Fairlee portion of Route 20. Ricaud's Branch Road's approach to the intersection also has been altered; it is now perpendicular. Formerly it followed a southwesterly, angled course past the Hynson's Chapel site and the marshy portion of Ricaud's Branch, the headwaters of Shipyard Creek (or Shipping Creek), which lies to the west and southwest of the site. The old, low roadbed is still visible to the southeast of the present intersection.

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8. Significance

Survey No. K-591

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History

Specific dates 1774 & ca. 1806 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☒ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Old Hynson's Chapel is important in the history of Methodism in both Kent County and the region. While not the location of the first "appointment," or regular preaching place, on the Eastern Shore or in Kent County (the first was near Worton), the first chapel on the site was the first structure erected by the Methodists on the Delmarva Peninsula for a place of worship (1774). It was the only Methodist-built chapel on the Peninsula that predated the American Revolution. The group that met at (John?) Carvill Hynson's home near the site before the erection of the chapel was the first organized Methodist society in Kent County (1773), the next stage of development after an appointment. The best known itinerant, and "Father of American Methodism" Francis Asbury, brought Methodism (initially a reform movement within the Church of England) to this area of lower Kent County and organized the society. Two notable early Methodist itinerant preachers, William Gill and John Smith, were buried in the chapel cemetery. The site may have possible archeological significance because of the two chapels built here by the Hynson's congregation. An "African Meeting House," perhaps utilizing the original Hynson's building, was located nearby, according to an 1860 map. It was one of the county's earliest independent or semi-independent Methodist chapels for blacks. Not only was Kent County important in the early history of American Methodism as an area of strong, early growth, but Methodism during the nineteenth century came to be the county's dominant religious group and remained so in the twentieth century. Though the details are not fully known, Old Hynson's Chapel as a place of worship appears to have been a victim of the growing number of Methodists and chapels and the divisiveness that the new denomination suffered in the nineteenth century.

A roadside historical marker should be erected on Route 20 near this site.

(cont.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-591

E.C. Hallman, the Garden Of Methodism. Published for the Peninsula Conference of the Methodist Church, ca. 1948.

William Henry Williams, The Garden of American Methodism: The Delmarva Peninsula, 1769-1820. Wilmington, Del.: Published by Scholarly Resources, Inc., for the Peninsula Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1984.

10. Geographical Data

Continued

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification _____

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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Located on Poplar Neck, which is demarcated by Shipyard Creek on the west and the west fork of Langford Creek on the east, the wooded, brushy site, elevated above the marshy stream to the west and southwest, is now most easily entered from Ricaud's Branch Road where a precast culvert was placed and a path cleared preparatory to a commemorative service held in April, 1985. The last such service had been held in 1940. The short path leads to a recently cleared area which is the presumed site of Old Hynson's Chapel; indeed the area appears somewhat sunken, possibly indicating a prior foundation. No old foundation materials could be seen, however. As noted under #8, old foundation bricks were to have been removed in the nineteenth century. At the south end of the clearing a large log cross has been erected, perhaps indicating the south gable end of a former structure. Beyond the brush and trees to the south and southwest of the cross is the old burial ground, recently cleared of much of its brush. It is reached by walking to the west and then south. Four or five grave sites are marked with readable inscribed stones; they date from 1817 to 1854. One crudely incised stone appears to date from 1800. There are numerous fieldstones, probable indicators of other graves.

Methodist records indicate that two notable early lay itinerants were buried in the burial ground. William Gill, the first Delaware native itinerant and a tailor with no formal education, died near Hynson's Chapel in 1788 while serving Kent Circuit. Self-educated, he became known as the philosopher of the Methodist church and was respected not only for his learning but also his preaching ability. Ordained an elder, he was a member of the 1784 Christmas Conference in Baltimore that organized the Methodist Church in America. (Hallman p.375) James Smith, also considered a talented preacher, died in 1812 and was said to have been buried at Gill's side. (Thomas Smith, p. 173-174). Grave markers for either one were not seen.

The small woodland in which the chapel site is located appears to be used seasonally for deer hunting. There are several elevated deer blinds along apparent deer runs. To the east and south are cultivated farm fields. To the north and west are woodlands, part of which belong to Remington Farms. No buildings are visible from the site.

#8.1Continued
(GENERAL STATEMENT OF HISTORY AND SUPPORT)

Beginning about 1730, English Anglican clerics John and Charles Wesley as well as others associated with them at Oxford, launched a reform movement within the Church of England, also the established church of the colony of Maryland during this pre-Revolutionary period. Intending to revitalize the Church, the reformers focused on the evangelical and emotional aspects of Christianity, spiritual rebirth, preaching rather than ritual, systematic religious study in classes, a moral life, and social service. Traditional Anglican clergymen derisively dubbed them "Methodists," denounced their fervor as an "enthusiasm," and denied them pulpits. Denied access to large congregations within church walls and wishing to extend his message beyond the small religious discussion groups (societies) within the Church of England, John Wesley determined to reach out to the unchurched multitudes by preaching wherever he could gather a crowd, in fields and town marketplaces. Unlike most leaders of the "Great Awakening," who also stirred listeners to conversions and changed lives, Wesley followed up by organizing his converts into societies for ongoing fellowship and spiritual growth. In order to establish and promote new societies and to maintain the religious and moral changes achieved in the societies already established, Wesley became an itinerant. Initially preferring to enlist only sympathetic ordained clergymen as fellow itinerants but finding their number insufficient, Wesley soon turned to talented lay preachers to help reach the unchurched and minister to the numerous new societies, which were organized into circuits. Traditional Anglicans considered the laymen theologically ignorant and often "unsound," but they did speak the language of the poor and middle classes and were effective in making converts.

During the 1760's Methodism began to spread to the middle colonies, with a few societies established by unofficial lay preachers. In 1769 Wesley began to send official Methodist missionaries. They also arrived in pairs in 1771, 1773, and 1774. The most notable of these lay missionaries was Francis Asbury, who was to become known as the Father of American Methodism. After several years of itinerancy in England, he embarked for Philadelphia in September, 1771, at the age of 26. By December, 1772, now Wesley's General Assistant to the Methodist Societies in the American colonies, he was in Kent County.

Asbury was not the first Methodist preacher to come to Kent County. In 1769 or 1770 the first Methodists came to the Eastern Shore of Maryland from the Western Shore, from the society of lay preacher Robert Strawbridge. They visited and prayed with John Randle (Randall) at his house in the Worton area (Williams, p. 26), and soon after Strawbridge himself preached there. Other preachers preceding Asbury followed, in rather haphazard fashion, unlike the organized circuit riding of a few years later.

John Randle's house seems to have been the first regular "appointment" on the Eastern Shore, an appointment being a regular preaching place while a "society," the next stage, was "an organized unit of Methodist converts." (Hallman, p. 13) The second and third appointments were in Cecil County. The fourth was at the house of Carvill Hynson (Hinson), who presumably lived in the vicinity of the chapel built in 1774 which came to be known as Hynson's Chapel. The fifth was at a Mr. Dixon's, at or near Georgetown Cross Roads (now Galena). The sixth and seventh appointments were also in Kent County, at Edward Gibbs' (thought to be between Worton and Rock Hall) and at Still Pond.

8.2

The first Eastern Shore society, as well as the first permanent Delmarva Peninsula society, was organized in 1772 at Solomon Hersey's at Bohemia in Cecil County. By the next year there were two societies in Kent County, one of them at Hynson's and the other at Randle's. Hynson's appears to have been the first. By 1774 Methodism in the upper Eastern Shore had thrived to such an extent that it was necessary to establish a Kent Circuit, encompassing originally not only Kent County but also Cecil and the northern portion of Queen Anne's. In the first year of the Kent Circuit there were 253 Methodists. (Williams, p.28) Despite persecution, the American Revolution and the Methodists leaders' dilemmas about loyalty, oath-taking, and pacifism, Methodism grew rapidly on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and in Delaware. By 1780 the total membership of all American societies was reported to be about 8500, with less than 400 of these north of the Mason-Dixon line. (Hallman, p.14)

Francis Asbury himself was the organizer of the Hynson's society; he was the first Methodist preacher in that part of the county. On his first trip into Kent County, in December 1772, after lodging in Georgetown and speaking informally to several small groups there, he traveled to John Randle's near Worton, where he "preached to many people, rich and poor... and at another place in the evening." His journal entry for the following day, Friday December 11, states that he "went twelve miles into Kent County, and had many great people to hear me." It is most likely that this location was in the vicinity of the subsequent Hynson's Chapel, perhaps even at St. Paul's Church (sometimes referred to as the "lower church"), the Anglican church less than one mile to the east of Hynson's on Ricaud's Branch Road. Asbury's lengthy account of the confrontation he had before preaching with Mr. (Robert) Read, "a church minister," (the rector of St. Paul's, on temporary assignment there) over Asbury's authority to speak and which of them had responsibility for the people's souls indicates the conflict between traditional Anglicans and the Methodists. When Asbury preached anyway, Read "came into the house in a great rage" and charged that Asbury "spoke against learning." Though there is no mention of Carvill Hynson in this first entry related to the Hynson's society, Asbury may have spoken at his house if not at St. Paul's. Hynson's house probably was located near the eventual chapel site, which most likely was a corner of Hynson's property.

During a later trip into Kent County, on Wednesday, March 17, 1773, the day after being at John Randle's near Worton, Asbury "went down to the lower church, but with some backwardness of mind. However, there were many people who were still and attentive; and I felt a melting sense of God in my soul." The reference here seems to be to St. Paul's since Hynson's Chapel was not yet built.

Asbury's entry for Monday, August 2, 1773, says that, some days later, after "public worship, at Mr. Gibbs's," in Kent County, he rode to "Mr. Hinson's and was kindly entertained." Asbury evidently spent about two weeks in lower Kent County, spending part of his time at the Hynsons' and part at the Gibbs'; the period is only partially recorded. On Friday the 13th he preached first at Gibbs', then in the evening at Hynsons'. "On Saturday, a multitude of people attended the preaching of the word, and the Lord was with us of a truth." This appears to have been at Hynsons'. On Tuesday he left, crossing the Bay.

8.3 Continued

About one month later Asbury, with a few friends, returned to Kent County from the Western Shore, stopping first at Randles' and Kennard's in the Worton area. After preaching there, he was "seized with a quartan ague, which was attended with much pain in my back and limbs." Though too ill to preach again or hold prayer sessions, he "ventured to ride in a carriage as far as Mr. Hynson's in the afternoon (of September 22, 1773). On Thursday the 23rd he preached at Mr. Hynson's and again on the 24th to a "small, serious congregation." After preaching to "a large company at Mr. Gibbs's" on the 25th, he recrossed the Bay.

After itinerating elsewhere for more than four years, Asbury returned to lower Kent County on December 1, 1777, crossing the bay and reaching Carvill Hynson's at night. In the entry for this date he states that he "was the first of our preachers who carried the Gospel into this neighbourhood." For Sunday, December 7, he noted that "Though I spoke with feeling and warmth, yet the people were dull both at F.T.'s (location unknown) and Mr. Hinson's" He also mentions his appointment to Kent Circuit, though the editor of his journal (Abingdon Press edition) states that there is no record of such appointment. After preaching elsewhere on the circuit, he returned to Hynson's on the 23rd. On the 24th he "exhorted the people who came together, and we spent some time in prayer." On Christmas Day he appears to have attended St. Paul's Church, where "Mr. W. read a good sermon, suitable to the day." (Mr. W. most likely was James Jones Wilmer.) Asbury later preached "at the preaching house," (Hynson's Chapel), where "many people attended." On the 26th he preached a funeral sermon in the morning and "addressed a congregation at Mr. Hinson's" in the afternoon.

A month later, on January 25, 1778, after preaching at Randle's in the morning, Asbury rode "ten miles farther to the meeting house, "Hynson's Chapel, still the only meeting house in the area. Here he "preached to about three hundred solemn and attentive people." It is not likely that the chapel could hold 300 people; despite the probable cold weather, Asbury may have spoken outdoors (or overestimated the attendees). After a trip to nearby Quaker Neck, where he found that "my mind was shut up, and I had no power to speak to the people," he returned to the meeting house and preached a funeral sermon on January 28.

Asbury next visited Hynson's Chapel briefly, on October 9, 1785, stating that he preached "at Kent Old Chapel in the afternoon and at night in Chestertown," where he always had "an enlargement in preaching in this very wicked place" By this time, following the Revolution, the Methodists had separated themselves from the heir to the Church of England, the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Though Asbury was in upper Kent County in 1788 and 1795, he did not return to Hynson's Chapel until March 27, 1806, where evidently a new chapel had been built. He says he "spoke in the new, neat chapel in Kent; and was long and laboured. I visited Carvill Hinson: after a twenty years' separation, we who were left were comforted in God together. I have made twenty-four miles today--feeble, and afflicted with a cold and sore throat, but happy in God." This was Asbury's last recorded visit to Hynson's Chapel.

The first structure for worship erected by the Methodists on the Delmarva Peninsula was Old Hynson's Chapel, apparently initially referred to as the Kent Meeting House or Kent Chapel. Completed in 1774, it later became known as Hynson's Chapel in honor of Carvill Hynson, in whose home Rock Hall area Methodists first met. (Hallman, p.14)

The original chapel on the site probably was frame, small, and of simple construction. No information survives except that after the framework was erected, opponents of the Methodists came at night and tore it down; a second version states that after the rafters were up, vandals pushed them over, and a third states that the framework was pulled down, cut up and burned. (Hallman, p.14, p. 314) The society then rebuilt. Although most early American Methodists still considered themselves Anglicans as well as Methodists, this hostile action by vandals or partisans of the traditional Anglican church indicates the difficult environment in which the first American Methodists labored. Early Methodists in Kent County as elsewhere, were also threatened physically and verbally. .

By 1806, the year of Asbury's last visit to Hynson's Chapel, a second, probably higher-quality and larger building was built ("a new, neat chapel"). No details are available about its construction. By this date, however, a brick Methodist meeting house had been built in Chestertown, at one corner of the town square. It is possible that the first chapel was not demolished but was later used as the "African Meeting House" shown on the 1860 Martenet Map of Kent County, first on its original foundation and perhaps later moved to the south side of the creek, where the black group was deeded property in 1853.

#8 Continued

It is not entirely clear just which of the numerous Hynsons Carvill Hynson was, but he appears to have been the one who bore the full name of John Carvill Hynson (b. 1743-d. 1816, according to Hanson, pp. 102-103, 108, though in one instance he is misnamed as Charles Carvill Hynson; Charles Hynson was the name of John Carvill Hynson's elder brother). His parents were Charles Hynson and Phoebe Carvill.. The family may have used the name Carvill as a first name in order to distinguish him from other John Hynsons.

A search was made for a legal conveyance from Hynson for the chapel site on the assumption that most likely the chapel was located on a corner of Hynson's property. None was found. It is, of course, possible that there never was a formal transaction.

The assumption that this is the correct Hynson is perhaps (and perhaps not) contradicted by the strong Methodist stance against slavery; Asbury was especially persuaded by Wesley's anti-slavery position. Some itinerants even refused to lodge or dine with slaveholders. During part of 1785 the Methodist Discipline denied "communion and membership to those unwilling to free their slaves," and the Philadelphia Annual Conference (of which Kent County was a part) during 1807-08 "directed that slaveholders be treated as 'contumacious persons' if they didn't follow a "delayed manumission schedule based on age." (Williams, p. 163) The 1790 census lists John Carvill Hynson as the owner of 17 slaves a fairly large number for Kent County in that year. However, Hynson, presumably an early Methodist leader locally and one with whom Francis Asbury in 1806 celebrated a reunion, after a 20-year separation (Asbury Journal new edition, vol. 2, p. 499), and therefore presumably still a Methodist, still owned slaves in 1814, though they were now fewer in number. In his will of that year (Wills 9/332) he willed his slaves, though he did also provide a schedule for their eventual manumission, a course the Methodists did encourage for those unwilling to free slaves promptly upon affiliation with the Methodists. Therefore, he could be seen as a conforming Methodist, at least in Eastern Shore terms. The Methodists reserved their greatest condemnation and sanctions for the buying and selling of slaves. The Discipline of 1796 prohibited Methodists from the slave trade and did enforce the prohibition, with at least some recorded expulsions on the Delmarva Peninsula. Perhaps Hynson purchased no new slaves over the years; the slaves he still owned in 1814 may have been those remaining from his pre-Methodist or early Methodist period and/or their natural increase. Perhaps he retained his slaves for paternalistic reasons. A recent historian of Delmarva Methodism concludes that "although Delmarva Methodists were strongly urged to liberate their slaves, generally they weren't coerced," except during the periods mentioned above. (Williams)

Though no real conclusions about the Hynsons and slaveholding can be drawn from the account of itinerant Thomas Rankin's conversation with Hynson's wife in 1774, the Methodists' ministry (which did include blacks) was judged to make slaves docile, if not free. Hynson's wife told Rankin that previous to the arrival of Methodism it had been impossible to keep slaves from stealing everything in sight. But now, slaveholders "could leave every kind of food exposed and none (was) touched by any of them ." A pleased Rankin responded that the gospel, in its purity and power, could perform that which the laws faintly attempt to do.

#8 Continued

In the area of the present-day intersection, the 1860 Martenet's Map of Kent County shows two buildings south of Ricaud's Branch Road and north of Ricaud's Creek, and one building south of the creek. There are, however, only two names shown for the three buildings, and it is not entirely clear to which buildings the names belong. Besides "Hynson's M.E. Chapel," an "African M.(eeting) H.(ouse)" is noted. It is not clear whether both buildings stood adjacent to each other north of the creek, with the "African M.H." closer to it, or whether Hynson's Chapel was the building immediately north of the creek and the African chapel south of it. If the former, the building to the south of the creek is unattributed and its nature unknown. If the latter, the second building north of the creek is unattributed and its nature unknown. It is possible that one of the buildings north of the creek was the first chapel building and the other the second, with the blacks' having taken over the older one. It is not clear to which building the possible foundation site now cleared and visible belongs. Two other buildings are near the cluster, one to the northeast and one to the south. Both seem to have been dwellings. The 1877 Kent County Atlas shows only one building in this area, the apparent dwelling farthest to the northeast. Both Old Hynson's and the African church are gone.

The most likely possibility is that the "African M.H." was the building to the south of the creek. On March 26, 1853, John P. Smith and his wife, Lea, evidently whites, sold a 40-foot square plot "for the use of the coloured people members of the Methodist Episcopal Church." (Kent Co. Land Records JFG 1/156) The 1860 map shows a Smith located just to the southwest of the building to the south of the creek. Most likely the Smith property extended north to the creek and they were selling a small part of it. The plot was said to be "situated a few rods below Hynson's Chapel," therefore presumably to the south. No building or Smith designation appears on the 1877 atlas map.

A so-called survey of the plot, dated January 1849, is part of the deed. Unfortunately, it lacks adequate reference points to the surrounding area. The plot was "a lot of ground forty feet square, lying on the main road leading from Hails (sp?) Corner to Hynsons Chapel, and bounded by a line commencing at a stone marked A on the plot." Courses were given, and the plot was said to contain ten perches, plotted by a scale of 20 perches to the acre (which seems inconsistent with the above stated measure, though this was within the period of changing survey definitions). A sketch was included and showed a square with 40 feet on each side, the beginning point "A" the southern corner.

The deed reveals that the buyers, the trustees for the black church, were both black and white. James H. Edes, Richard Coleman, and Thomas Strong were designated as "white men," and Peter Glenn, Abram Brown, Henry Jones, James Jones, Henry Ward and Samuel Reed were designated as "coloured." This indicates that the whites retained considerable control over these black Methodists, even though they were now allowed (and perhaps even encouraged) to have their own building and meet separately. It is not known how long the practice endured in Kent County of requiring blacks to worship, if not with whites, under white supervision. In Millington even after the Civil War blacks chafed at having whites teach their Sunday School classes. (See Williams, pp. 111ff. for a good discussion of this topic.)

That the survey was made in January 1849 indicates that the chapel for blacks was at least contemplated by that date. Since Kent County churches were notorious for after-the-fact deeds, it may even have been built by then

#8 Continued

despite the fact that the 1853 deed states that the trustees "shall erect and build...thereon a house or place of worship and to keep it always erected for the use of the coloured people, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church (and) they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such ministers and preachers belonging to Said church as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conference of the Ministers and Preachers of Said Methodist Episcopal Church or by the annual conference authorize by said General Conference to preach and expound Gods Holy Word therein."

No other information is now available about the black church. It is probable that by 1877, when it does not appear on the map of that year, most of these black Methodists had moved off the scattered farms where most had worked, whether free or slave, and relocated in one or more of the black communities which grew after the Civil War. As will be discussed later, by 1863 the white "Old" Hynson's also was dead. After the Civil War a number of these lower-county black communities, none in the immediate Hynson's area, came to have their own churches. The one in Edesville, now called Holy Trinity, is A.M.E. (one of four in the county). Asbury Church at Georgetown (K-481), Aaron Chapel in Sharptown (K-510) and John Wesley Chapel (K-486) at Sandy Bottom, near St. Paul's, also could be considered the descendants of the "African Meeting House" at Hynson's, which must have been the earliest separate Methodist chapel serving blacks in the lower-county area.

If not the earliest black Methodist church in Kent County, it very likely was one of the earliest. Martenet's map shows only three other black churches in Kent County in 1860. An "African Meeting House" was in the vicinity of present-day Golts, in the northeastern part of the county. This probably became the still-surviving Wesley Henry Church (K-628). An "African M.E." building was shown just west of Chesterville; the congregation as Asbury Church moved around the turn of the century to Chesterville Forest (see K-619). Another, now called Fountain Church, was shown west of Urieville. Though not found on the map, the congregation that became Janes Church in Chestertown acquired its first building in 1831, and Joshua Chapel in Morgnec, also not on the map, claims a founding date of 1839.

Information about Hynson's Chapel between Asbury's last visit in 1806 and the relocating of Hynson's Chapel in the 1860s to a site on Ricaud's Branch Road two miles to the east is fragmentary. Thomas Smith, an itinerant serving Kent County in 1820, reported that he preached to "large and attentive congregations" at many locations, including Hynson's Chapel. He also reported on August, 1820, camp meeting in Hynson's Woods, which may have been larger at that time than at present. (Smith, p.184)

Camp meetings were a new aspect of Methodism in Maryland at the turn of the nineteenth century. After a decline in membership between about 1792 and 1800, the large, emotional, often rowdy gatherings were one reason for the revival of Maryland Methodism. Methodists tripled in number on the Delmarva Peninsula between 1800 and 1807 (Williams, 81); some attributed the increase to the camp meetings. John Emory, an apprentice attorney, wrote after an especially successful camp meeting in Kent County (location not specified) that never was there a "more favorable" means of spreading the gospel message than the camp meeting." (Williams, p.81) A large multi-day camp meeting in Smyrna, Delaware, in 1805 was said to have attracted nine to ten thousand people on Sunday, the day of best attendance. Blacks and whites were present but separated for the preaching

8.8 Continued

(the common policy also within church buildings); some camp meetings also separated the men from the women. In the interest of order, in 1816 the Maryland legislature prohibited the sale of liquor within two miles of a camp meeting in Kent, Cecil and Dorchester counties. Many camp meetings became annual events in the early years of the nineteenth century. Some persisted through the nineteenth century; the term was commonly used into the twentieth century, though to refer to revivals of several days to a week in duration to which participants traveled daily from their own homes or homes of friends or relatives..

Smith said of the meeting in Hynson's Woods that "thousands attended, and many were converted and joined the church, among whom were some of the first families in Kent County." The Sunday crowd was so large that "to insure good order and attention on the part of the mixed multitude, some of whom were people in high life," they appointed "General Philip Reed, late senator in congress (also a hero of the War of 1812), and Colonel W. Weakes (sic), as guards for the day, to seat the congregation, and keep order in time of preaching." Mention of these two men indicates the broad appeal and inclusiveness of the Methodist meetings. General Reed became a vestryman of Christ Church. I.U., near Worton in 1804; he was buried in its churchyard after his death in 1829. (200th anniversary commemorative pamphlet) There is no indication that Reed abandoned the Episcopal Church for Methodism. Perhaps a significant number of people attended both churches, as was the practice of Martha Ogle Forman of Rose Hill in Cecil County, described in her diary of the first half of the nineteenth century. She attended the Methodist meetings for the preaching and the Episcopal service for the sacraments and the traditional service. However, the dramatic decline in the county's Episcopal churches' membership and buildings during the first quarter of the nineteenth century is undoubtedly in large part attributable to the rise of Methodism.

In fact, it was perhaps the success of Methodism that brought the demise of Old Hynson's Chapel. For many years the only Methodist chapel in its area of the county, Old Hynson's later had to compete with many churches in the surrounding area (Salem at Fairlee; Wesley Chapel, a Methodist Protestant church south of Edesville, between Hynson's and Rock Hall; Bond Chapel near Pomona in Quaker Neck; Kesley Chapel in Broad Neck; and the Rock Hall Methodist Church). With increased numbers of Methodists in lower county communities, new congregations could be established closer to home and the relatively long journey to Old Hynson's avoided. Perhaps the differences among Methodists during the 1820's over governance which led to a schism and the establishment of Methodist Protestant Church in 1828-30 also played a role in the decline of Old Hynson's. Methodist Protestant Wesley Chapel, 2-3/4 miles to the south between Edesville and Rock Hall, was established in 1829, perhaps fatally weakening Old Hynson's. Differences over the political issues of the time, including slavery, may also have led local Methodists to leave one church and join another. Though indicative of differences of opinion in Kent County, there were only two churches affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, formed in 1845, and they were not in the lower county area but in Millington and Chesterville.

8.9 Continued

Records have not been found to indicate when services ceased at Old Hynson's and whether the building was destroyed, as by fire, deteriorated beyond repair, or simply abandoned for a more favorable location, one more convenient for a remnant that did not move membership to other churches. The latest date on a marked stone in the old cemetery is 1854, and that is in a family plot in which burials began in 1837 and, logically, continued. Old Hynson's Chapel never seems to have been part of a village. About half a mile to the south was the community of Rees' Corner (where now only two houses remain), and about one mile to the east was the community surrounding St. Paul's Church, now also much reduced.

During the Civil War, on September 10, 1863, the cornerstone was laid for a new, brick Hynson's Chapel (see report for K-599) two miles to the east on Ricaud's Branch-Langford Road, at the intersection with Baker's Lane, but also (fatally), like the old location, not in a populous area. In his message on that day, The Rev. J.E. Smith, minister of the circuit of which Hynson's was a part, only alluded to problems within the local Methodist church which caused the demise of Old Hynson's and the establishment of the new. Using military terminology, he said that "in the old place their Methodistic batteries seemed to be useless; the enemy had retired beyond their reach, and as Methodism had never learned to strike her colors, they determined to take a more eligible position and strike anew for God and humanity." (Kent News, Sept. 12, 1863) In 1866 the land was formally transferred, a gift of one of the trustees (Deed book JKH 5/526). In February, 1868 the minutes of the new church's trustees resolved "that Bro. George Leary be permitted to appropriate and move the foundation refuse of the Old Hynson's Chapel" upon payment of \$8.00. (minutes held by Bond Chapel) The new chapel never thrived, and by 1882 it was clear, as a circuit report put it, that "Hynson's is dead." It seems that, perhaps once again, it was largely a matter of too many churches for too few Methodists in the vicinity.

E.C. Hallman, in his history of Delmarva Methodism, was not really correct in stating that Walton Chapel (later know as Mowbray Chapel) at Cliffs in Quaker Neck was a "natural successor" of Old Hynson's, as was true of New Hynson's. (P. 317) Though it is true that the bricks from New Hynson's were used to rebuild Walton's after an 1889 fire, that is the only direct link. The land for Walton's Chapel was purchased in 1864 (JKH 4/218), making Walton's a contemporary of New Hynson's rather than a successor. When services were halted at New Hynson's, whatever membership remnant was left probably was scattered among other nearby churches, Walton's perhaps among them, though it was not the closest to New Hynson's.

#9 Continued

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